

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed June 4, 2007 has been reviewed and carefully considered. Claims 1-30 are pending. No new matter has been added.

Claim 1 currently stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) in view of United States Patent No. 4,526,831 to Hatchadoorian in view of Murley, 4,536,148. The applicant respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejection of this independent claim.

The Hatchadoorian reference, US 4,526,831 is directed exclusively to thermoforming reinforced sheets. The stated range of reinforcing filler of between 5-50% (column 4, lines 3 – 5, will inherently effect the transmission of light through the product thereby eliminating any optical qualities. The patent requires direct impingement of the air flow onto the reinforced sheet, by stating:

[I]t is necessary to maintain the right temperature and pressure conditions not only to permit the sheet to conform to the shape of the mold but also to permit the molten polymer material to flow through the reinforcing agent so as to make an essentially complete contact with the mold. [emphasis added]

When exposed to direct impingement, the optical carriers of the invention acquire ripple defects, characterized by wavy distortions in the otherwise uniformly thick film. (Spec. page 11, lines 21 – 26). Accordingly, claim 1 has been amended to emphasize deflecting the air stream to produce a uniformly thick optical carrier. In Table I, Hatchadoorian shows that all unreinforced sheets (Samples 1 – 12) have unacceptable COII values, and the remainder have widely varying values. Applicants quantify uniform optical quality in the specification by: low sphere measurements having a mean of -0.01 diopters and a standard deviation of 0.03 (pg. 14, lines 4 – 5). Hatchadoorian is admittedly only concerned with mold replication on its cosmetic surface.

In order to have an adequate volume in which to deflect the air stream, the invention provides an oversized shroud that sits radially beyond the vents, which are spaced outwardly

from the insert. None of the references show this configuration. Amended claim 1 clearly recites vents that are separate and distinct from the mold-receiving aperture. The vents are particularly described as being located between the aperture and the shroud.

Murley has the same limited volume shroud as Hatchadoorian. The port 84 mentioned in the Office Action is delivering air to the shroud, designated as wall 76. Air in the region of shroud wall 76 is then directly impinging onto the sheet. In claim 1, it is the air stream within the shroud that is deflected.

In fact, all the reference indicate that the general state of the art is to clamp the shroud right at the periphery of the mold. None of the references show a shroud that is wide enough to include vents spaced from the mold periphery.

Before turning to the additional rejections, it should be noted that none of the references are in applicants field of art that relates to forming optical quality carriers. In the ophthalmic industry, lenses and carriers must be formed in a range of base curves. The prior art of record shows dedicated molds, and does not accommodate methods that use various sized ophthalmic mold inserts. Amended claim 1 recites a method where those mold inserts are adjustably disposed through an aperture in the vented platform.

Claims 2, 6 and 7 are rejected in further light of Neibling, US 5,108,530 and Cruckshank US 3,753,830. The significance of the channels of claim 2, is that they are claimed with respect to the gap between the vented platform and the sub-platform. The gap communicates with the vents and has the base member of the mold insert installed through it, per claim 6. Cruckshank shows mold 18 with side air vents. Mold 18 is sitting on top of the equipment platform, and its movable sides 120 preclude an arrangement where platform vents could communicate with a gap underneath the platform. Hatchadoorian also has a mold 13 sitting on top of the equipment platform 7, whereby the references collectively teach away from adjustably disposing a mold insert through an aperture, as recited in amended claim 1. The references are also silent as to adjusting the height of the mold insert/base member at the sub-platform, below the gap, per claim 6.

In comparing claim 1 to the references, the claim recites: an adjustable mold insert for an optical carrier rather than dedicated molds for non-optical products; disposing the mold insert through an aperture in the platform rather than fixedly positioning the mold on the platform; locating vents between the aperture and the shroud rather than clamping the shroud at the mold periphery and omitting platform vents; and deflecting the air stream to produce a uniformly thick optical carrier rather than directly impinging the air stream or a piston on to the product to induce transmission detracting ripples.

In comparing claims 2 and 6 to the references, the claims recite: a gap between temperature controlled platforms rather than a single temperature controlled mold or mold block; installing a mold insert/base member through the vented platform and gap rather than setting a unitary mold on or in a platform; and adjusting/locking the mold insert/base member at the sub-platform underneath the gap rather than providing a dedicated mold in a fixed configuration.

Claims 3-5, and 8-30 depend from claim 1, and include the same features and limitations recited in independent claim 1. Thus, the dependent claims are patentable over the prior art for at least the reasons stated above.

Enclosed is a two-month Petition of Time to Respond to the Office Action. The office is authorized to charges Applicants Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-1433 the fee of \$460.

It is believed that no additional fees or charges are currently due. However, in the event that any additional fees or charges are required at this time in connection with the application, they may be charged to applicant's representatives Deposit Account No. 50-1433.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of the claims set forth in the Office Action of June 4, 2007 be withdrawn, that pending claims 1-30 be allowed, and that the case proceed to early issuance of Letters Patent in due course.

Respectfully submitted,

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